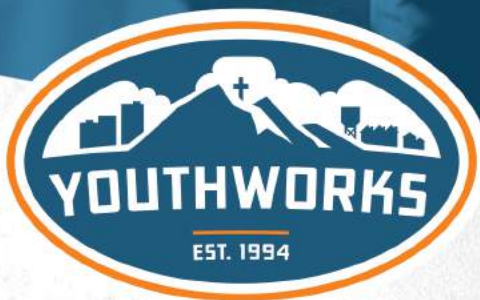


Preparing Your Team



25 YEARS OF CHRIST-CENTERED MISSION TRIPS

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PREPARING YOUR TEAM

Resource Overview

PURPOSE

Preparing Your Team Resources are tools that will help your group maximize their YouthWorks mission trip experience. These resources are designed to build your team before your trip and debrief their experiences afterward.

Pre-trip materials will help students, Adult Leaders and parents prepare mentally and spiritually for the mission week through team sessions and learning about the type of community they will serve. **Post-trip** materials include a debriefing session where participants can reflect, share their story and continue using what they learned during their YouthWorks week.

HOW TO USE

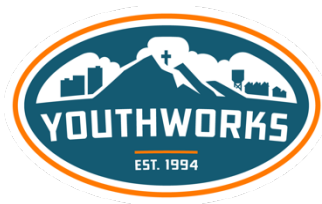
We strongly encourage you to engage your youth and Adult Leaders with this material in order to get the most out of your week in the community you will be partnering with. **We have found that the best way to do this is by having team meetings.** You will need to plan ahead and pick meeting times now (even for the post-trip team session). You'll also want to communicate that you expect both your students and leaders to be involved throughout the preparation and post-trip meetings.

It may work best to meet before or after already scheduled times, such as youth group or after church on Sundays. Some groups meet weekly while others meet every other week or once a month. Your meeting frequency may depend on when your trip is scheduled during the summer.

OVERVIEW

Here is an overview of the Preparing Your Team Resources:

- **TEAM SESSION GUIDES (pages 2-3)** – How to use the five session outlines to lead your youth and Adult Leaders prior to your YW trip.
- **ALTERNATIVE TEAM SESSION FORMAT IDEAS (page 4)** – Alternate session outlines in case you don't have time for five sessions. 3 Session, Full Day and Half Day options are provided.
- **TEAM SESSION OUTLINES (pages 5-29)** – Five 60-90 minute session outlines for your team meetings.
- **GENERAL TEAM PREPARATION RESOURCES (page 30)** – Book and video resources to use for team meetings.
- **SESSION IDEAS for ALUMNI MISSION TRIPPERS (pages 31-32)** – Some tips and questions for students and leaders who have been on YW trips before.



TEAM SESSIONS GUIDE

There are five Team Sessions, each lasting 60–90 minutes. Each Team Session has an outline that you can follow. We recommend the five-session format to allow your group optimal time to learn, prepare and build relationships as a team.

If you are unable to do all five sessions, we have included alternative sessions formats. Check out the Alternative Team Session Format Ideas sheet for suggestions on how to modify the sessions.

PURPOSE OF SESSIONS

These sessions are written to help your group grow together as a team as they think and pray about their future trip. The sessions will engage your group on multiple levels. Participants will share their own thoughts and experiences with others and take time to let Scripture help them understand more of the meaning, purpose and biblical basis for what they will be doing on their YouthWorks trip. Each session serves a specific purpose which is explained at the beginning of its outline.

HOW TO USE OUTLINES

We have created outlines for each of the five preparation sessions. Each outline includes a **Supply List** with items needed for the activities in that session as well as an explanation of the **Purpose** of the session. The purpose is basically what we hope you will have accomplished by the end of the session, so please keep it in mind as you tailor each session to the needs of your group. Read through the entire outline to determine how to make the material work best for your group.

COMPONENTS OF EACH SESSION

These components can typically be used in any order, and the times listed are merely suggestions of how you may want to structure your group meeting.

START: An opening activity or mixer that draws the group in, creating a fun environment to encourage participation (5–10 minutes)

You can use the idea we have given in the outline or one of your own. You know your group best, so consider the group dynamic when planning this component.

- Some groups may need to move around and exert energy before launching into the session content.
- Some groups may not know one another very well and may need to do more “get to know you” activities to help form relationships.

This can be a time to have a little fun, but we also recommend choosing activities that are intentional and can be debriefed and discussed. Use an activity that will give you points to draw from when you move into the other components of the session.

SHARE: Stories to help youth connect to ideas and concepts (5–10 minutes)

This is a time for you, as the Trip Leader, to go a little bit deeper and share about the selected topic. Take this chance to be vulnerable with your students as you draw upon and share stories about your own experiences. As you are open and honest about your experiences, your youth will be challenged to do the same.

- We have included “Points to Cover” that we think are important, as well as some suggested ways to frame your time of sharing.

- You may want to involve other Adult Leaders who will be going on the trip with you. Maybe they can share a story of their own or assist you in leading this time (or any point in your session). This will help your youth get to know their Adult Leaders better.

MOVE: A suggested activity chosen to drive home the session's theme (length varies)

Youth remember what they do more than what you say, so this section offers a chance for them to interact with the session's topic. This section often incorporates some sort of smaller group interaction. Be intentional about forming these groups, as they can be a great way to begin building your team. Involve your Adult Leaders in facilitating these small groups and find ways to mix it up so students can get to know each other better.

- You may also want to consider establishing consistent "Prayer Partners" or "Family Groups" within your group who will intentionally encourage and pray for one another before, during and after the trip.

THINK: Examining what the Bible says about the session's topic (15-20 minutes)

After capturing interest with the Move section, your youth should be ready to dig deeper. This section examines what the Bible says about the selected topic and invites youth to think a little more deeply about it. We have varied the interaction in this section – youth will be asked to get into small groups, get into the large group or, sometimes, do individual thinking.

We have included Scripture that speaks to the selected topic; feel free to substitute or include other passages as well.

- "Think Sheets" have been provided for some of the sessions to guide the Bible study and discussion.

PRAY: A prayer focus based on the session's topic (5-10 minutes)

We want to encourage your group to begin praying for themselves, each other and the community they will be visiting so we have incorporated different ways of praying and a variety of things for which to pray.

GO: A way to bring ideas home (5 minutes or less)

This section is a little bit like homework, challenging youth to continue to think and act on what they've discussed in this session. Many sessions also begin with an activity/discussion that ties into the Go section from the previous meeting, giving you an opportunity to see what they have discovered since last time. This section allows you to touch base with your youth about the things they are learning and will help solidify it for them. In this section, students will sometimes be asked to discuss something with their parents/guardians. Involving families helps to prepare youth and encourages lasting life-change after the trip.

A WORD TO ALUMNI GROUPS:

We believe the five sessions we've outlined here provide a strong basis for any team preparing for a trip, including those groups with mission trip veterans. Each mission experience offers an opportunity for new learning, expectation setting and growth together as a group. If you've come on a YouthWorks trip before and already used these materials to prepare your team, the reality is your alumni may be participating in some of the same activities. Encourage them to approach each step in the process as a new opportunity to build upon what they've experienced and learned before. In each of the session outlines, we've included additional ideas for groups who have been on mission trips before.

For even more ideas for engaging alumni, check out the **SESSION IDEAS FOR ALUMNI MISSION TRIPPERS** sheet and the **GENERAL TEAM PREPARATION RESOURCES** sheet.



ALTERNATIVE TEAM SESSION FORMAT IDEAS

3 SESSIONS

If you are only able to meet with your group three times prior to your trip rather than five, we recommend focusing on the outlines for the following sessions:

- **Session 1: TEAM WORK**
- **Session 3: UNDERSTANDING**
- **Session 5: ACTION**

We also suggest that you read through Sessions 2 and 4 ahead of time and note any topics or points you would like to cover with your group; this may include the creation of a Team Covenant as described in the “Start and Move” section of Session 2.

1 FULL DAY SESSION

For a full day session, you most likely won’t want to follow the full session outlines written here. For instance, you won’t need to do each of the “Start” activities. In doing this, it should be possible to cover the material in all five sessions during one full day. Some suggestions for making this work:

- You may want to follow the “Pray” sections for each session, or you may want to have one longer session of prayer at some point in the day.
- You should consider enlisting the help of another adult or student leader(s) for the “Share” sections. Mix things up a little bit so you aren’t the only one talking each time.
- In your planning, look at each of the “Go” sections to determine how you will incorporate them. You may even want to assign some of these ahead of time so students can come prepared.
- The day could get long and tiring for youth, so incorporate some active elements, breaks for rest and socializing, and of course, plenty of food!

1 HALF-DAY SESSION

For a half-day session, we recommend the following:

- **Session 1: TEAM WORK**
- **Session 2: EXPECTATIONS (Start and Move only)**
- **Session 3: UNDERSTANDING**
- **Session 4: ATTITUDE OF LOVE (Think only)**
- **Session 5: ACTION**
- Consider how you want to incorporate the “Pray” sections – doing each of them individually or doing one longer time of prayer.
- Look at the “Go” sections ahead of time and assign a few of them so that youth can come to your meeting prepared.



SESSION 1

Teamwork

PURPOSE

- To help your youth begin to know one another and build relationships as a mission team.
- To encourage your group towards deeper thinking about what it means to be a team and what their role is on the team.

TEAM MEETING OUTLINE

I. START

Goal: Engage your group in a team-building activity that requires the whole group's participation.

Activity Suggestion: Do a couple activities that get more difficult or build on each other as you go. We have provided a couple examples of things you could do to get started.

1. **SPEED NAME game:** Have everyone stand in a large circle. Ask each person to go around and say their name as fast as they can; time the group as they go. The first round will be more of a practice, but do it again so they have a chance to beat their first time. On the third round, up the ante by having them say the name of the person who went before them plus their own name. (The person who goes first will only say their name.) Again, they will get better with practice. After you are done point out the importance of communication and staying in the game so you know what's going on.
2. **NAME TRAIN game:** A leader begins the name train by saying their name five times in a row and doing a little dance. Then the leader asks someone else in the circle their name and they both say it five times and do a little dance. The new person joins the train and they both go to a third person. The new person says their name, and all three repeat it and do a little dance. Repeat this over and over until everyone has a turn. Split into multiple trains if you have a large group.
3. **ORDER game:** Get in order from shortest to tallest without speaking, or get in order from youngest to oldest, again, without speaking. After playing, ask them to tell you what they learned about each other through the exercise.
4. **PLAY A GAME:** If your group already knows one another's names, take time to build community by playing an icebreaker game together. Games that promote teamwork work really well in this setting.

II. SHARE

Transition your meeting to discuss what it is to be a team. Points to Cover:

1. We are establishing a new team.
 - Our group is becoming a team as we embark on this experience together.

SUPPLY LIST

- ☐ Paper and writing utensils for everyone in the group
- ☐ Stopwatch
- ☐ One copy of the Think Sheet for each participant
- ☐ One copy of the Go Sheet for each participant

- We have a common goal: We all want to serve Jesus.
 - We are going to share a common and unique experience.
 - As a group we now have the opportunity to create this new team. We need to consider:
2. What kind of team we want to be.
 - How we will become that kind of team.
 - How we will care for each other, so we stay a team.
 3. Share a story (ideas)
 - Share about a team you have been on in the past. Describe what was challenging as well as rewarding about this.
 - Tell a story about a famous team and how they worked together.
 - If you have taken your group on a YouthWorks trip in the past, share about the previous team(s). Highlight how this year's team is new and different. You could also have a student share.
 4. Other ideas
 - Watch a TV or movie clip that communicates what it means to be a team.
 - Have each member of your team (or a few student leaders) bring their own "team story" to the meeting to share.

III. MOVE

1. Divide the group into partners or small groups. Everyone should have a piece of paper and something to write with. Have each person introduce themselves to the other(s), and answer the following questions:
 - What is one thing (talent, skill, experience, trait) you bring to this team?
 - What is one way in which this team can help and support you as you prepare for this YouthWorks trip?
2. Others in the group should take notes about their teammates. Once everyone in each group has had a chance to answer the questions, bring the whole group back together. If you have a larger group, have a few small groups join together. Have group members take turns introducing one other person in their group and sharing what that person has to offer the team and how the team can support them.

IV. THINK (use attached think sheet)

Encourage time for individual reflection and small-group discussion as your youth consider what the Bible says about working together. The Think Sheet helps your students take a closer look at 1 Corinthians 12:12-22, 24b-27. For younger groups, you could also use the story in Mark 2:1-5 to talk about teamwork and the importance of working together to accomplish a difficult task.

V. PRAY

Circle up as a team, join hands and take turns thanking God for the unique characteristics and personalities that make up your team. Pray for unity and a spirit of teamwork among your group and ask God to remove the things that could get in the way of being a team.

VI. GO (use attached go sheet)

This section leads you into your next meeting. If you have time, have individuals answer the questions on the Go Sheet to start thinking about what to include in your Team Covenant. You can choose to have the students take these home and bring them to the next meeting or collect and redistribute them later.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-22. Answer and discuss the following questions.

1. What are three body parts mentioned in this passage? What do they do for your body and what would happen if you were missing any of these parts?

Body Part	_____	_____	_____
How is it used?			
What happens if missing?			

2. What roles might each of these body parts represent on your YouthWorks mission trip?

3. What would be missing if you took away any one of these parts of your team?

Next, read 1 Corinthians 12:24b-26. Answer and discuss the following questions:

1. What are some things that get in the way of being a team?

2. How could verse 26 be applied to your team?

Write out 1 Corinthians 12:27 in the space below. Underneath it, write the one thing (talent, skill, experience, trait) you bring to your team that you talked about with your group earlier.

YOUR TEAM COVENANT

A covenant is literally “an agreement between two parties.” Making a covenant is the process of defining expectations and intentions as a group. As individuals and as a group, your mission trip team will consider what it is you want to agree upon and what commitments you will make to one another.

To help you think through these things, write down your answers to the following questions in the space below or on a separate sheet of paper. Bring your answers to your next team meeting.

1. What do you personally want to get out of this trip?
2. What qualities should define your team?
3. What do you expect from your fellow team members?
4. What do you expect from your team leaders?
5. What can your fellow team members and leaders expect from you?
6. How should conflict be handled within this team?



SESSION 2

Expectations

PURPOSE

- To discuss your expectations of each other as a team.
- To understand the expectations that YouthWorks has for each trip participant.
- To give each person a chance to explore and verbalize their expectations for this mission experience.
- To encourage the group to set aside expectations that could get in the way of a full experience.

I. START AND MOVE

Goal: Give the team members an opportunity to verbalize personal expectations. Gather ideas for your Team Covenant. Discuss YouthWorks' Youth Covenant.

Overview: Using the Go Sheet from the first session, have small and large-group discussions about individual and team expectations for the mission trip.

Using Alumni: If you have alumni on your team, include an alumni student in each group. If the group is mostly alumni, have them talk about their previous experience on trips – what they are hoping stays the same and what they are hoping can be different. (See the Session Ideas for Alumni Mission Trippers Sheet for a list of questions)

1. Break into small groups and have youth share about their expectations for this trip/experience with each other (Question 1 on the Go Sheet from Team Session 1).
2. Bring everyone back together to share with the large group. Have someone write the various expectations on a white board while they are being shared. Then walk through their responses and discuss what happens if the expectations are met, or if they aren't met, and whether they are realistic or unrealistic.
Consider having alumni students talk about their past experiences with expectations and how they managed them on the trip; what was and was not realistic, etc.
3. Go back into small groups and have them share answers to Questions 2–4 on their Go Sheet.
4. In the large group have the groups share a synopsis of what they discussed so they can hear what other groups talked about. Listen for themes and have someone write those themes on a white board so you can gather it all to create the Team Covenant.
5. Ask the group: Based on our sharing here, what expectations do we have of each other as a team?

SUPPLY LIST

- ☐ Whiteboard and markers or something similar
- ☐ Copies of Youthworks' Youth Covenant
- ☐ Copies of Think Sheet for each participant
- ☐ Signable YW Covenant (on your dashboard)
- ☐ Writing utensils for each participant
- ☐ Bibles

In addition to personal expectations and team expectations, YouthWorks also has expectations.

Pass out the Youth Covenant (page 13) and have them read and discuss it in their small groups. Have them discuss:

- Questions they have about these expectations.
- Why YouthWorks might have each of these expectations.
- How following these expectations might make their YouthWorks experience better.

Get back together with the large group and further discuss these things.

II. SHARE

Points to Cover:

1. Recap personal, team and YouthWorks expectations.
2. Acknowledge that there are two different types of expectations:
 - Expectations that someone will or should do something.
 - Expectations that something will happen.
3. Transition from talking about what people should do to expectations of what will happen.
4. Encourage realistic expectations and an open and flexible attitude about what will happen on the trip.

Suggestions to frame your “Points to Cover”:

1. Your own story:
 - An occasion when your expectations weren’t met.
 - A big surprise you received.
 - A trip you took that turned out differently than you thought it would.
2. Tell a story from history or sports when expectations weren’t met or things weren’t what they appeared to be.
3. If you have youth who have been on mission trips before, this might be a great time to incorporate an Alumni Panel. (See the Session Ideas for Alumni Mission Trippers Sheet)

III. THINK

Encourage time for individual reflection and small-group discussion as your youth take a look at a biblical example of expectations. The following Think Sheet takes your youth through the prophecy about the coming of Christ, the resulting expectations people had about His coming, as well as the fulfillment of those prophecies in the life of Christ. Jesus certainly didn’t come in the way people expected!

After discussing the last question on the Think Sheet, you may want to close this time with further discussion of your youth’s expectations; encourage them to be open to what God has in store for them on their YouthWorks trip.

IV. PRAY

Divide into partners and share at least one hope and one fear for the mission trip. Pray for your partner.

V. GO

1. Have your group sign the group's Youth Covenant – bring this with you on your trip!
2. Hand out the Go half-sheets to your group. Have the youth go home and talk to their parents or guardians about expectations. They will recap what they discussed in this session and ask their parents/guardians about what they expect of the student and of this trip.
3. They also will be instructed to go to the YouthWorks website and look up the site they are going to (www.youthworks.com/trips) to start learning more about it.



TEAM YOUTH COVENANT

You're about to meet some new people in a new place and hopefully learn some pretty incredible stuff! But before you do, there are a couple things we want everybody to agree on, so your trip will be the best it can be. We've thought carefully about what's important for everyone to see eye-to-eye on and listed those things below. These expectations will help to make this experience meaningful, fun and safe for everyone – and by “everyone,” we mean YouthWorks staff, community members, Adult Leaders, other students and, especially, you!

All youth participants have signed this covenant online before their trip. Because we want to respect the both the community where you are serving and each other, your whole group will sign this covenant together.

- We agree to look for ways to serve others with a joyful attitude, so we can help people like Jesus did. We understand that we are on the trip to serve God, help a community, build new relationships and learn new things. We agree to come prepared to do just that!
- We are aware that our actions affect people other than just us. We will not bring or use any weapon, alcohol or substances during our mission trip week.
- We want to stay focused on the people and experiences in the community we will be visiting. Because of this, we will consider leaving our cell phones or other electronic devices at home. If we choose to bring them, we understand that our use of them will be limited, and we will risk theft or loss. We understand that our parents will be given instructions on how to contact our Adult Leaders in case we need to be reached.
- We want to respect the people around us, so we agree to bring clothes in line with YouthWorks' “Clothes to Pack” list.
- We agree that this mission week is a group experience. We'll be in different group settings all week. Because of this, we will do our best to build community, create relationships, be welcoming and include others. We agree to treat everyone – leaders, staff, other students and community members – with the utmost respect.
- We realize that there are adults in our lives and on the trip, who care about our well-being. Plus, we want to be safe! So, we agree to stay within the designated YouthWorks boundaries, follow rules at ministry sites, stay in groups of three or more, respect gender-specific areas (sleeping rooms, restrooms and showers), and refrain from using cell phones in these areas due to privacy concerns.
- It matters how we treat people's things, so we agree that we will respect the property of all participants, the community members and the housing site where we stay. Our actions will show our love for Jesus and others. We will keep in mind the purpose of the trip and our job of representing Jesus to the community.

By signing anywhere on this page, we agree to follow all the above expectations because we want to be safe, love others and represent Jesus well at all times.

Read the following passages that prophesy the birth of Christ and record what each of these passages tell us about the coming of Christ.

Isaiah 7:14

Isaiah 9:7

Micah 5:2

Zechariah 9:9

Based on these passages, what kind of person were the people expecting the coming Christ to be?

What would you expect a king to be like? Where would he be born? Who would he hang out with? What kind of personality might he have?

According to Matthew 1:18-23 and Luke 2:1-7, where did the Christ child come from? Did his beginnings fit in with the prophecy that was given about him in the above passages?

Like today, the kings and queens of Jesus' day didn't often interact with or hang out with common people. According to the following passages whom did Jesus interact with?

Luke 11:37

Luke 18:15-16

Luke 18:35-39

Luke 19:1-7

How did Jesus meet or not meet people's expectations? Was that a good thing?

Think back to your expectations of what your mission trip will be like. How could those expectations be a good thing for your trip? How could those same expectations hold you back?

GOSHEET

EXPECTATIONS

Go home and talk to your parents or guardians about expectations. Tell them about what you've discussed in this session and ask them about what they expect of you and of this trip.

With your parents, visit the YouthWorks website. Look up the site you are going to (www.youthworks.com/trips) to start learning more about it.

GOSHEET

EXPECTATIONS

Go home and talk to your parents or guardians about expectations. Tell them about what you've discussed in this session and ask them about what they expect of you and of this trip.

With your parents, visit the YouthWorks website. Look up the site you are going to (www.youthworks.com/trips) to start learning more about it.



SESSION 3

Understanding

PURPOSE

- To recognize the differences in how we as individuals experience life and interact with the world.
- To develop an attitude of seeking to learn about and understand the experiences of those you meet – especially those in the YouthWorks community you will be visiting.
- To spend time as a team learning more about how we can prepare to go to the specific community in which we will be serving.

I. START

Goal: Create dialogue about the consistent aspects of life and the differences and similarities between what is “normal” for each person.

1. Break up into small groups.
 - Be clear about how many people should be in each group. (We recommend 3-4.)
 - Depending on your group, you may want to identify a group leader or put an adult leader in specific groups to help keep the question-asking/sharing moving.
2. Have each group share their answers to the following questions. (Post the list upfront so they can refer to it during discussion. They'll need to refer to this list during the Move section too.)
 - Who is a consistent part of your day-to-day life each week? Limit it to the most significant 10 people.
 - What places do you go/visit every week?
 - What activities do you participate in every week?
 - What do you worry about during a normal week?

ALUMNI: If this exercise is familiar, simply have people who don't know much about each other get together and share about their lives. Ask a question like, “If you were to follow each other around for a week, what would you learn about each other?”

3. Debrief the exercise as a large group.
 - Ask: Did anyone have the same exact week?
 - Probably not. Each person had different answers despite the fact that you might live in the same neighborhood, go to the same school, have similar friends or go to the same church.
 - Were there any surprises? Did you think someone would have a certain set of activities, and they were really different?
 - What components of that “normal” week will be the same during your YW week?
 - Help them to realize that there won't be many.

SUPPLY LIST

- ☐ Notecards
- ☐ Writing utensils
- ☐ Move Sheet profiles separated (to be handed out to small groups)
- ☐ Butcher paper
- ☐ Think Sheets (one per person)
- ☐ Bibles

II. MOVE

The following Move Sheet contains brief profiles of several different people. Have the group get back into their small groups (or form new ones) and give each group one profile.

1. Give each group a piece of butcher paper long enough for one person in the group to lay down on and be traced. Let this tracing represent the person they are profiling.
2. One person should read the profile aloud for the rest of the group.
3. Draw or write anything that might help to represent this person and their life experiences.
4. As a small group, answer the same questions answered above; also think about who and what might not be a part of this person's everyday life experience.
5. Think about what they don't know about this person and what questions they would ask to learn more. Have them write these questions on the butcher paper as well.
6. Have them introduce their person to the group, talk a bit about what this person's experiences are like, and share the questions they would ask to get to know this person better.

III. SHARE

Points to Cover:

1. We each have an understanding of our own individual world.
2. Challenge youth to think about how they gain an understanding of other people's worlds. Do they make assumptions based on looks, or do they listen, ask questions and really take time to get to know people?

Suggestion to frame your "Points to Cover":

1. Share about a time when you were taken out of your normal routine or comfort zone – could be a mission trip, new baby, move (yours or a friend's), etc. Talk about how that experience gave you a glimpse into someone else's life or the way it changed your life.
2. Use the experiences from the Start exercise and Move section. Incorporate what the youth shared and how they interacted in the exercises.

ALUMNI: Another option is to have a student share about a relationship that they built with someone on the last mission trip.

IV. THINK

Encourage your group to go deeper in this area through reflection and discussion as your youth take a look at Biblical examples of understanding. The following Think Sheets take youth through the ways Jesus showed understanding for people that were overlooked by others.

V. PRAY

Based on what you already know about your YouthWorks community (from the resources you've received from the Service Center and at www.youthworks.com), make a list together of the ways you can begin praying for that community. Have people volunteer to pray for the things on the list and then have them write those things on a notecard to take home. Encourage your youth to pray daily for these things. To close, pray as a large group, having people pray for the things they wrote down. Remember, serving in a godly way requires a renewing of our minds; invite God to help you do this daily.

VI. GO

Have each participant research some aspect of the community you'll be going to. You may want to do some of your own research ahead of time and have some books, articles or websites available to them; encourage them to go beyond Wikipedia. Consider giving some direction to their research – one small group focuses on history, one focuses on current events in the community/region, etc.

Bonus Suggestion: If you know of a film or documentary that would be relevant to the community you're going to, this would be a great time to plan a movie night. (See the General Team Preparation Resources sheet for some ideas)

Get to know the following individuals:

Ethel is a 79-year-old woman who lives at a nursing home. It is a good facility, there are lots of activities planned, and she has a few good friends there, but as she gets older, more and more of her friends are passing away. She lost her husband to cancer 10 years ago. She has five children. One of them lives about 45 minutes away and visits once or twice a month, occasionally bringing the grandkids. Her other four children all live in other states and might visit once or twice a year. She loves music and knitting – when her arthritis isn't bothering her too much.

Rick is an 8-year-old boy who lives in a very low-income neighborhood. Rick's father is in prison – so are two of his uncles and his older brother. He and his older sister and two younger brothers live with their grandmother since his mom works two different jobs and often works nights. A few of his cousins also spend the night there sometimes, making the house pretty crowded. Rick doesn't like school very much and doesn't read as well as the other kids in his class. He really likes to draw and wants to be a professional basketball player when he grows up.

Mike is a 41-year-old man with disabilities. Mike's mind functions at the level of a 7 year old. He has some health problems and difficulty getting around because of physical disabilities. He spends his days at a center for adults with disabilities and lives in a group home with four other men. His disability prevents him from having much of a mental filter, so the things he says are sometimes funny, surprising or even offensive. Mike is not able to have a job, but he enjoys participating in various activities at the center – especially dancing. Though it doesn't happen very often, one of his favorite things to do is visit the local amusement park.

Vince is a 59-year-old man who is homeless. Vince fought in the Vietnam War, and since then, he's never really been able to hold a steady job. He was married for a short time and has a daughter he hasn't seen in 20 years. He has struggled with being addicted to drugs and alcohol, and he's currently in a recovery and rehabilitation program at the local Salvation Army. He also attends Bible study there weekly. Vince is a great storyteller and sometimes turns his stories into poetry. He'll share his poems with anyone who is willing to listen.

Tara is a 30-year-old woman who lives in a small town. Tara has three children who are 13, 11 and 4, and she's raising them on her own. Tara worked at the local factory, but it just closed down so she lost her job. There aren't many other jobs in town, but Tara can't afford to move and doesn't want to leave this town where she grew up. She'd like to enroll in the nursing program at the community college 30 minutes away but needs to find at least a part-time job first. Her aging house is starting to fall apart. Tara is a great cook and loves making good meals for her kids; she also enjoys baking and is always sharing cakes and cookies with her neighbors.

Abby is an 18-year-old girl who grew up on the Gulf Coast. At the beginning of her senior year, a hurricane destroyed her family's home and many of the homes around theirs. Since they couldn't rebuild their home right away, her family moved a few hours away to stay with some relatives. Abby had to enroll in school in a new city. It's been hard to make new friends, and she misses her "normal" life back home. Her parents have been stressed out about money and moving. She's trying to decide where to go to college and is hoping to find a good pre-med program but isn't sure if her family will be able to afford it.

Read the following passages from the Bible. How did Jesus show understanding for people that were most likely overlooked by others?

Matthew 8:1-4 (Jesus heals a man with leprosy)

Matthew 20:29-34 (Two blind men receive sight)

Luke 8:43-48 (Jesus heals a woman subject to bleeding)

John 5:1-9 (Jesus heals an invalid man at the pool of Bethesda)

Pick the passage that stood out to you. Imagine you were a “character” from that passage. What are some thoughts and emotions you would have after interacting with Jesus?

In the Bible, some people asked for Jesus’ time and attention. Other people Jesus sought out on his own. Read Luke 7:11-17. How did Jesus seek out the widow?

Think about a time you interacted with a person completely different than you. Were you able to understand their point of view? How was your reaction similar and different to Jesus’ example?

How can understanding other people be helpful for your mission trip?



SESSION 4

Attitude of Love

PURPOSE

- To explore and learn more about real love.
- To cultivate an attitude of love that will motivate service.
- To encourage the team to put love into action today and each day after.

I. START

Goal: Help the group realize how often we use the word “love.”

1. Play the song game.
 - Directions: Pick a word and sing a song (or part of a song) with that word in it. Then each person in the group needs to think of a song with that word in it and sing it as well. You pass each round by coming up with a new song; if someone can't think of a song they are out.
 - Start with the word “heart” for the first round, then use the word “love” for the second round. Both words are found in plenty of songs so the rounds should last a little while.

SUPPLY LIST

- ☐ Notecards
- ☐ Writing utensils
- ☐ Old magazines
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Glue or tape
- ☐ Posterboard
- ☐ Copies of Think Sheet for each participant
- ☐ Bibles

II. SHARE

Points to Cover:

1. When was the last time you said, “I love you,” to someone? When did you say it? Who did you say it to?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 out loud to the group (or have someone in the group ready to do it).
3. Think about these verses, in reference to the person you said, “I love you,” to. You said the words, but did you (and do you) act them too?

Suggestion to frame your “Points to Cover”:

1. Share your own story of a time you said, “I love you,” and what you learned about using those words.
2. Talk about additional Scripture that has taught you about love.
3. Do a word study of the origins of the word love and its various forms (affection, charity, friendship, etc. – see The Four Loves by C. S. Lewis).

III. MOVE

Working together in small groups, look through magazines to find images of love. Make a collage of images and words. Present your work to the larger group and share why you chose the particular things you did to represent love.

IV. THINK

Encourage time for individual reflection and small-group discussion as your youth consider what the Bible says about love. The Think Sheet helps your students take a closer look at 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a.

V. PRAY

Get into small groups and have everyone share what personally gets in the way of them showing an attitude of love and acting in love. Pray for one another in this area.

VI. GO

Think about one person who is hard for you to love. Commit to showing that person love in at least one way this week.

Based on the pictures and words you found in magazines, how should love be defined?

Now read 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a. Based on what you just read, how would you define love?

Did you write down the same definition?

How do the characteristics of love that you found in 1 Corinthians compare with the things you found in magazines?

Pick three characteristics of love found in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a and write down how each applies to loving your team and what barriers might keep you from loving in this way.

Characteristics of Love	How it Applies to my Team	What Barriers I Could Face

How does 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a change the way you think about love?

Look back at 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. What does this passage tell us about the importance of love?

How will you put love into action on your mission trip?

How can you put love into action now to prepare?



SESSION 5

Action

PURPOSE

- To engage your team in intentional thinking about servanthood and being a servant now, during the trip and after the trip.
- To help your mission team through understanding how serving each other will develop a stronger team.
- To introduce and help students understand the concept of mutual giving.

I. START

Goal: Get the group thinking about how others have served them recently, what it felt like and the effort it took from the person serving them.

1. Follow up from last week's "Go." (Think about one person who is hard for you to love. Commit to showing that person love in at least one way this week.) How did everyone do with this?
2. Pass out an index card to each person. Ask them to think about someone who had to give something up in order to serve them. Have them write...
 - The name of the person who served or showed love to them.
 - How it felt to be served by that person (to receive).
 - What it took on the part of that servant to serve (to give).

Bonus Idea: If you usually have snacks or drinks at your group meetings, this time don't just set them out for people to grab – plan a way for group members to serve each other.

II. SHARE

Points to Cover:

1. What does being a servant look like?
2. What does being a servant feel like?
3. What does it feel like to be served?

Alumni: Have students who have been on a trip think within the context of their mission trip for these questions.

SUPPLY LIST

- ☐ Index cards
- ☐ Writing utensils
- ☐ Supplies for church service projects
- ☐ Any props/supplies for the activity in the Think section
- ☐ Copies of Think Sheet for each participant
- ☐ Bibles

Suggestions to frame your “Points to Cover”:

1. Read one of the Scripture passages from the Think session.
2. Tell them a story about a servant. Explain the actions, attitude and impact of that person before you identify who they are. Choose someone who has made an impact on your life or a member of your church that some of the youth have a relationship with – someone they can connect to.
3. Give them a chance to brainstorm or dream about what kind of impact they could have with that kind of action.

III. MOVE

Do some small service projects around your church. Talk with your pastor and/or other church leaders ahead of time to find out what some needs are; focus on projects that could be accomplished in a fairly short time (15–20 minutes). These should be projects that can be done in pairs or small groups so you can continue to encourage teamwork. Some suggestions:

- Wash windows.
- Stuff bulletins or mailings.
- Dust pews and/or fixtures in the sanctuary.
- Sanitize toys in the nursery.
- Make cards to send to church members who are sick or in nursing homes.
- Make “thank you” cards for your pastor, church secretary and other church staff.

IV. THINK

Encourage time for individual and small-group processing as your youth consider what the Bible says about action. After looking at Galatians 6:9–10, Philippians 2:12–15 and Colossians 3:1–17, use the Think Sheet to help your students take a closer look at biblical action and what we are called to as followers of Christ. You will need to break your group into at least four smaller groups and then assign one passage to each group. There are a lot more passages that talk about how we should act as followers of Christ; these are just a sampling, so feel free to use your own or to add to this list.

V. PRAY

In the same small groups, pray that God would give you the attitude of a servant. Pray for endurance to serve with an attitude of love even when circumstances are hard. Pray also for the person you listed in “Start,” thanking God for their service and praying that God would strengthen them.

VI. GO

Commit to doing something to serve someone in the next week – and think about doing this in a way that might be hard or sacrificial for you. Tell one other person in your group what you plan to do so they can pray for you and hold you accountable.

Additional Go: Plan a service opportunity in your church or local community. Serve together as a group sometime before your trip.

Break into four groups and assign each group a passage of scripture:

Galatians 6:9-10 Philippians 2:12-15 Colossians 3:1-11 Colossians 3:12-17

Individually answer the following questions and then discuss them in your group.

- What was the most rewarding thing about the service project that you just completed?
- What was the hardest part about doing the service?
- Who benefitted from the work that you just completed?

In your small group, read your assigned passage and answer the following questions.

- What does this passage say about serving? What does this passage call us to do?
- What benefits might we receive by following the guidelines in the passage?
- Is there anything listed in the passage that seems really hard to do? What makes it hard to do?

- What would make it easier?
- How can we encourage one another to serve those around us, even when it's hard?

As a group, come up with a 2-3 minute infomercial for your passage. It should be creative and fun but get the main points and message across. Everyone in your group should be involved and have a role in the production. You also need to include the Scripture reference somewhere in it.



GENERAL TEAM PREPARATION RESOURCES

GENERAL

POOR KIDS DOCUMENTARY

PBS produced a thought-provoking documentary about the realities of poverty. Watch the documentary as a group or separately and discuss afterwards. The documentary is available online:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/poor-kids/>

URBAN

URBAN ENTRY CURRICULUM

www.urbanentry.org is a great source for information, specifically about doing mission trips to urban areas.

THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM

Theirs is the Kingdom by Bob Lupton, is a beautiful collection of stories about doing ministry in urban areas. The whole book is easy to read or individual stories can easily stand-alone. Consider using it as a book study with your group, or reading a story together followed by discussion.

NATIVE AMERICAN

ONE CHURCH MANY TRIBES

One Church Many Tribes, written by Native church leader Richard Twiss, is a reflection on Native American spirituality and culture. As a group or individuals, read chapters such as "A Native Worldview" or "A Redemptive View of Native Culture" and discuss.

SMALL TOWN & RURAL

A HIDDEN AMERICA: CHILDREN OF THE MOUNTAINS

In 2009, ABC News produced a documentary highlighting the stories of four children living in Appalachia. The stories emphasize the strengths common to small town or rural areas including: family ties, a strong work ethic and community togetherness while presenting common challenges such as isolation, lack of public transportation and lack of access to resources.

Though the documentary specifically addresses life in Appalachia, the stories are transferable to other communities in small town and rural America as well. Watch a video clip and discuss as a group.



SESSION IDEAS FOR ALUMNI MISSION TRIPPERS

We know alumni can offer great perspective and leadership to your team. It's important to honor their experience as well as to encourage them to be open to new experiences this time around. The following are ideas for preparing youth alumni, adult leader alumni, and groups that are returning to the same community.

YOUTH ALUMNI

ALUMNI PANEL: Incorporate a panel discussion into one of your sessions, allowing alumni youth to share their experiences and thoughts. Prep the panel group ahead of time and focus on the work and what happens on the trip and/or on how their lives were impacted.

ALUMNI MEETING: If you have a group that has both alumni and new youth, set aside some time to meet with just the alumni youth. Take time to celebrate their experience as well as brainstorm what they can offer to their team based on their past experiences. Discuss the following questions as a group:

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What was the most meaningful part of your experience?
- What was the hardest part of your last trip?
- What mistakes did you see your team make last time? How can you help avoid those this time?
- What questions did you have when you left for your mission trip? Did you find any answers? How can you become a better learner during this trip?
- How do we want our group to be different? Before? During? After the trip?
- How do you want to be different? How can you better prepare physically, emotionally, socially or spiritually for what is ahead?

Take time to prepare for a new experience. Acknowledge that things will be different than last time. Affirm their experience but remind them that the first-time participants will need to experience some things for themselves without relying on alumni who have done it before.

Ask your alumni to reflect/journal on the following questions to prepare their hearts and minds for a brand new mission trip experience:

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- What have you learned about your new community that is different from your experience in your last community?
- Remembering your first mission trip, what things are best for people on their first trip to experience for themselves?
- What are the things you need to think differently about for this trip?
- What are 2-3 areas you would like to grow in as a result of this trip?

ADULT ALUMNI

GROUP MEETINGS: Adult alumni are a great resource to both youth and new adults. Make sure they attend any adult leader meetings or youth sessions you have. Invite them to share stories and examples from previous trips. Their involvement at the meetings gives them a chance to hear about this year's trip and get connected as soon as possible to the new experience and the new people involved.

ONE-ON-ONE CONVERSATIONS: Take the time to talk with each alumni adult leader individually to share what you appreciated about their presence last year and to share what you are looking forward to about having them be a part of this year's experience. Ask them the following questions:

CONVERSATION QUESTIONS

- What was the most meaningful part of your previous experience?
- What was the hardest part of your last trip?
- What are your expectations for this year's trip?
- What ideas do you have for our team?

RETURNING TO THE SAME COMMUNITY

We are thankful for groups that return to the same communities. The fact that you're returning:

HONORS THE COMMUNITY: You communicate value and love to our friends and partners in the community by caring enough about them to visit them again.

DEEPENS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITY: This will not only change the dynamic of your week there but might also open the door for you to continue those relationships in the future (whether on another YouthWorks trip or through visits at other times). This helps to further our desire for relationships of mutual giving in all our communities.

INCREASES YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMMUNITY: As you see year after year what life is like in the community, you will learn more of its needs and its strengths. You have the unique opportunity to see how the community has developed on its own.

EXPECTATIONS: Address expectations with the alumni on your team. Keep in mind the following:

KEEP IN MIND:

- There is still more to learn and experience in this community.
- Other groups that will be at your site with you will likely be experiencing the community for the first time.
- You will likely have a completely different YouthWorks staff team than the one you had last time you were in this community. They may do things differently than past staff, and although you've been there before, they are still considered to be YouthWorks' experts on the community.
- Activities, ministry, the weekly schedule, age range of the site or the housing location may have changed since your last trip to the community.